RESTORATION REVIEW

The Restoration Mind . . .

THE BIBLICAL BASIS OF UNITY

The blight of division that has plagued the community of God through the centuries cannot be attributed to any ambiguity on the part of the Bible. The scriptures are abundantly clear as to what God's will is in regard to the unity of his people. It may be that we have failed the Bible by allowing our divisions to persist, but the Bible certainly has not failed us. It is unequivocal in the demands it lays down for the oneness of God's people, and it is all too plain in its declarations about division. Let us open the Bible and see what ground is laid for the unity of believers.

1. *Unity is prayed for by Jesus himself.*

It is a tender scene, the Master praying for men who had difficulty getting along with each other, who had trouble with their ambitious pride. He pr[illegible] for his disciples that they might one, and he included the last one of us in that prayer: "It is not for these alone that I pray, but for those also who through their words put their faith in me; may they all be one: as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, so also may they be in us, that the world may believe that thou didst send me" (Jn. 17:20-21).

This is the only mandate the church needs to get on with the task of healing its factious wounds. Jesus prayed to the Father that oneness would be a reality in us. What more do we need to motivate us to take these issues seriously and to become "a company of concerned ones" in reference to a divided church.

Jesus' prayer in our behalf reveals something very important about unity, that it is a means to something even greater, and not an end in itself. We are not to be united just to be united, however glorious that may be. The church is to be united because of the witness it has to make to the world: *that the world may believe that thou didst send me.* A divided church never has and never will have an impact upon a troubled world. We are to be *one* so that the world may be *won.*

2. *Unit[illegible] is praised as highly desirable.*

"How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity," say[illegible] Psa. 133. "It is fragrant as oil poured upon the head and falling over the beard, Aaron's beard, when the oil runs down over the collar of his vestments." This is to say that unity is as precious as the anointing of the Lord. The psalm goes on to liken it to the fallen dew, refreshing and inviting. The imagery here is especially significant when one realizes how precious

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Unity would have the same effect upon our parched and barren world, a world torn by war, racial strife, pollution and hunger. World leaders now speak of the unity of mankind as the only hope of survival. If ever there was a time for the unity of Christians, it is now, for a divided world has nothing to hear from a divided church.

We must rise up as one people and lay claim to the promise spoken of by the psalmist, for we need the refreshing anointment of unity upon our fevered brows and sagging spirits. Too long have we had divided homes and broken hearts; too long have we fractured and splintered into a multiplicity of warring parties; too long have we each gone his own way, unwilling to sit together in the assembly of the Lord; too long have debated and quarreled, dividing and subdividing; too long have we elevated men and *their* doctrines, allowing them to corral us into a faction of their own creation; too long have we been ruled by "editorocracy," permitting papers to preserve and solidify our hates and prejudices; too long have we been doctrinaire, accenting the inconsequential while neglecting the things that matter most; too long have we been confronting each Other rather than loving each other.

Now is the time to lay claim to "the seasons of refreshing from the presence of the Lord" which is promised in the glorious oneness of the body of Christ. It is a blessing far too rare among our people, our party lines being as solidified as they are. What a precious thing it is to claim every child of God as your brother, wherever you find him, however weak he may be. Brotherhood is a relationship created in heaven and sealed with the Holy Spirit, not something manipulated by party intrigue and preserved by sectarian loyalty. To claim a man as your brother on the ground that he is a son of your Father, and to treat him as such, is as sound as the gates of heaven, and as beautiful. It is like oil upon Aaron's beard. May God deliver us from the oppression of having to give a man the third degree, testing him on all those things that we make conditions of fellowship, before we can receive him as a brother. We do well to remember that whatever we make a requirement of one to enter into our fellowship is our creed. Jot down on a piece of paper what you demand of a brother before he can be in the fellowship of your congregation and you'll have your *written* creed instead of an unwritten one.

The Hebrew word for unity is this psalm is *yachad*, meaning "at one," which helps us to understand the nature of unity. This occurs when many diverse things become one in purpose and meaning. Unity in diversity. It happens (or should happen) in marriage, in a family. The "at one" idea reminds us of *atonement* or atonement. Our unity reaches back to the cross, to the atonement, where God's grace redeemed us, making us one with him and with each Other.

3. *Unity is commanded of us.*

"I appeal to you, my brothers, in the name of our lord Jesus Christ: agree among yourselves, and avoid divisions; be firmly joined in unity of mind and thought" (1 Co. 1:10) . Surely the apostle would not require of us to avoid divisions if it were not possible for us to do *so,* no more than Jesus would have prayed for a unity that was impossible. It becomes a matter of whether we desire to heed Paul's instructions and to fulfill the lord's prayer more than we desire to preserve our parties.

This passage helps us to see the nature of division as well as unity. The word here for division means *schism,* which implies a tear. It is properly translated *dissension,* which suggests that sides were taken, but no actual separation, which would be the word *faction.* There were cliques at Corinth, but no open split. The difference would be the distinction between a tear in a garment and a piece of the garment that is torn completely away and separated. So parties (or factions) were in the making at Corinth, due to the dissension, and Paul's intention is to put a stop to them. You notice that he refers to them as "the congregation of God's people at Corinth" and as "the body of Christ" again and again in his correspondence, and he even says, speaking of the Supper at Corinth, "Because there is one loaf, we, many as we are, are one body; for we, many as we are, are one loaf, one body" (1 Co. 10:17). He would never have said that if they were divided into various parties, each refusing to recognize the other as brothers, as is the case with us.

Paul shows us here that the road to division begins with quarreling: "I have been told, my brothers, by Chloe's's people that there are quarrels among you." And he makes it clear that this condition arises when too much confidence is placed in men.. "What I mean is this: each of you is saying; 'I am Paul's man', or 'I am for Apollos'; 'I follow Cephas', or I am Christ's'."

In one of our unity meetings one brother rose to his feet and said, "I can settle this matter of division here and now. *Shoot all the preachers!"* While this may deserve serious consideration, I hardly think that we should start here and now! But when one looks back over our long years of division he sees that the pattern has been what it was at Corinth: fussing and squabbling, and allowing our Goliaths to fight it out in the arena of public debate, which served only to polarize us all the more.

Paul's language points to the nature of unity in his use of the word *agreement:* "Agree among yourselves, and avoid divisions." Agreement here could hardly refer to unanimity of opinion or thinking alike on all matters, for that never has been and never will be, not even between two people, much less a congregation made up of people of diverse backgrounds. Placed as it is over against "avoid divisions," *agreement* refers to that one-ness of mind that will not allow dissensions to arise. Agreeing to be agreeable gets close to the idea. A man and wife, basking in the unity of their love, do not see eye-to-eye on everything, but they have agreeable dispositions and allow their affection for each other to transcend the differences. This is the force of the words that follow: *be firmly joined in*

unity of mind and thought. It does not mean that we have to see the millennium in the same way or have the same attitude about Herald of Truth or instrumental music, but rather that we are together in our love for Christ and in dedication to his cause. And we will not let Paul or Apollos or Cephas keep us from allowing love to hide the many faults we all have.

4. *Unity is urged upon us.*

"Spare no effort to make fast with bonds of peace the unity which the Spirit gives" (Eph. 4:3). This passage is most helpful in that it teaches us that the unity we seek is not ours to gain, but the Spirit's to give. It does not come by gatherings like this, nor by our wisdom and labor, as much as these things may help. Unity, like love and peace, is a gift of the Spirit.

While it is true that unity comes through love ("Love binds everything together in perfect harmony" Col. 2:14), it is a love that is manifested in our lives through the Holy Spirit. As he lives within us, his love will be shed abroad in our hearts, making us one with all those who are like-minded. This is the unity of the Spirit.

That there is something for us to do in all this is indicated in Paul's words "Spare no effort" or "Give all diligence." But notice that it is *the bonds of peace* that makes fast the unity of believers. We are to learn the fine art of peacemaking. There's another promise we can lay claim to: *How blest are the peacemakers; God shall call them his sons.* Peace is something to be *made* between persons or within a congregation. It is something to be waged. It is a victory to be won. The peace that the Spirit gives us can bind us together in such a precious relationship that the unity of the Spirit is indeed preserved.

Peace is such a lovely word. That is why I like the name *Irene,* which means peace. We can all be Irenes in the house of God, radiating that peace that preserves unity. Quite obviously the maker of peace has to be patient and forbearing, for some people are hard to take. That is why the apostle prefaces this call for unity with the words: "Be humble always and gentle, and patient too. Be forbearing with one another and charitable." If unity were based upon conformity, with everyone agreeing on everything and believing alike, there would be no need for patience and forbearance. It is the unlovely brother, the complainer, the one who insists on his own way, the one who is wrong, that the bond of peace encircles and draws to oneself.

There are many things that places strains upon the fellowship of the saints. Careless interpretation of scripture is one of them. Personality conflicts is another. Behavioral problems and "hang ups" of all sorts are others. The "brother in error" is still another, which I presume includes us all in one way or another. But strains are no real problem if the bond of peace is sufficiently strong.

5. *Unity is exemplified.*

Peter and Paul are good examples of unity in diversity, and surely that is the only kind of unity there is, for unity is certainly not conformity. Look how different these apostles were, even doctrinally. It went so far that on one occasion Paul rebukes Peter openly. And Paul's mission to the Gentiles called for such behavior on Paul's part that he was held suspect by his legalistic brethren in Jerusalem, including Peter. But the bond of peace preserved the unity and their fellowship was not threatened. They could extend to each other "the right hand of fellowship" despite the differences: Now if Paul and Peter could allow love for one another to transcend their difficulties, can we not manage things like cups, classes and organs? This means that Paul "fellowshipped a brother in error," and I'm afraid that if you are in the fellowship with anybody at all, it will have to be with a brother in error. There are no other kind.

What was true of Peter and Paul was true of congregations like Jerusalem and Corinth. How different these congregations were and how wrong! Jerusalem had its racial prejudice while Corinth had its schisms. One was Jewish, the other Gentile; one conservative, the other liberal. So vast were the differences that legalists from Jerusalem sought to undermine Paul's work at Corinth. Yet they were both *the body of Christ* and shared the common life. That, by the way, is the meaning of fellowship, which is the child of unity. Fellowship is the sharing of the common life, and some of our problems would be eased if we used *the shared life* more and the term *fellowship* less.

The Corinthians shared the common life with the Jerusalem saints through the bounty that they sent to them by the hands of Paul, and this kind of relationship is referred to in scripture as *fellowship.* This was the purpose of the weekly collections at Corinth. The money was to be sent to the poor in Judea. Would any of our congregations today, as different as Corinth and Jerusalem were, take up offerings for each other? This is one of the highest expressions of the shared life.

In his *Midsummer Night's Dream* Shakespeare caught the significance of this kind of unity.

So we grew together
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet a union in partition;
Two lovely berries moulded in one stem:
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart,
Two of the first, like coats of heraldry,
Due but to one, and crowned with one crest.

It is indeed "a union in partition," for in spite of race, nationality, sex, age, education, social standing, and all other partitions that wall men off from each other, we are all one in Jesus. It was a high and wide partition that separated Peter and Paul, Jerusalem and Corinth, but it was shattered by him who breaks down all barriers through his sacrifice on the cross.

Shakespeare saw too that unity is like berries "moulded in one stem," which is certainly the nature of Christian unity. We are one, not because we are bound to each other, but because we are together moulded into Christ. The members of our body are related to each other only because of their common relationship to our head. So we are all members together in the body of Christ. This is why *all* who are in Christ are in the fellowship of the Spirit and are for this reason brothers together. It is not a matter of how many points of doctrine we see alike, but whether we bear the same relationship to Jesus.

6. *Division, the opposite of unity, is declared sinful.*

"Anyone can see the kind of behavior that belongs to the lower nature: fornication, impurity, and indecency; idolatry and sorcery; quarrels, a contentious temper, envy, fits of rage, selfish ambitions, dissensions (divisions), and jealousies; drinking bouts, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I warned you before, that those who behave in such ways will never inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

All of us in our divided brotherhood need to take a long look at this passage so that we can be jarred by the company that division keeps. *Division is of the flesh,. partyism is carnal.* Our divisive ways are sinful. There is no other way to cut it. Perhaps we did not create these parties; perhaps we were born into them and they are our unhappy heritage. But the fact is that we are, in the main, too unconcerned about the matter. We are guilty of tolerating and preserving the sins of our fathers. Once we see the ugliness and sinfulness of parry intrigue, we will be moved to do something. What Jesus prayed for, what the Spirit urges upon us, what the early congregations exemplified, we can surely realize in our own generation. It is largely a matter of getting our "want to" fixed, and once the desire is there, the Spirit will make it a reality. — *Delivered at Restoration Workshop, Los Gatos, Ca., March 27, by the editor.*

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THE ODYSSEY OF DIVISION

ERVIN WATERS

Wherefore, receive ye one another, as Christ also received us. Ro. 15:7

Paul dearly sets forth here the basis upon which we are to accept each other as brothers. Why did it require me nearly 35 years of preaching to see it? Oh, what self-righteousness! Oh, what "holier than thou" attitude! Oh, what littleness, what ingratitude! All these years I have drawn upon his love, mercy, and grace, while I have in turn been so unloving, unmerciful, and ungracious to my brothers. Not brothers who, like the gnostics, denied that the Christ had come in the flesh. Not brothers who, like the fornicator at Corinth, live with their own step-mother. It was rather brothers equally sincere as I that I have rejected all these years, men more dedicated, more gracious and loving than I, and even more conversant in the Word.

We have together inherited a legacy of factionalism and our history has been an odyssey of division. Many of us now see the folly, futility and fallacy of refusing to receive each other because of differences of interpretation. I have myself been a merchant of this futility. At one time I could apply thirty or more laws of hermeneutics and exegesis, some of which could be found in no standard texts. These I refined and distilled in true pharisaical fashion, using them to perpetuate our sinful divisions. I was proud when brethren urged, "Ervin, get it in print lest it die with you." So I planned to publish a book on my hermeneutics. But I soon staggered under the weight of my own legalism and sickened with the divisions which I helped to produce as a partisan debater whose sword tasted the blood of many dear brethren in the polemical arena. But that book will never be written, for it would only add fuel to the flames of partyism.

That you might know me better, I represent the far right of the restoration brotherhood. I belong to the non-instrument, anti-missionary society, anti-Sunday School, one cup, one loaf passed undivided, unfermented grape juice, unleavened bread, anti-Herald of Truth TV and radio programs, anti-institutional orphan homes, and anti-Christian College. If that isn't enough, I could come up with some more!

How shall I make a test of fellowship of these things or anything that God has not made a condition of salvation? I charge that our divisions are due to a lack of the love and mercy toward each other that God has bestowed upon us all. When we love as he loves, we will receive each other as brothers. I thought for many years that we were divided over *the issues,* but I was blind. Now I see that all along it has been due to a lack of love for one another. I have been a hatchet man for factionalism long enough, and I am weary of serving as a sectarian battleaxe. I seek now to tear down the walls that lance helped build.

If we will let the principle of love rule our lives, we can have fellowship and unity now, right NOW. Our problems then can be problems *within* the fellowship. We do not have to sweep our differences under the rug, for we can talk about them lovingly and prayerfully. Then we will no longer blacklist each other, write up each other in the papers, or try to knock each other off in old style debating. We will have dialogue in panels and

forums, both public and private, but always in a spirit of love and in sharing the common life of the Spirit.

I once saw our odyssey of division as a necessary journey, for each new innovation called for another party. Division was the only answer we knew for our fierce disagreements. But it has not always been so. Back in 1849 the brethren organized the missionary society without drawing lines of fellowship. It was not until 1889 that our odyssey of division got under way, the year of the Sand Creek Declaration, advocated by Daniel Sommer and acceded to by David Lipscomb. Up until then our people differed over instrumental music without any lines being drawn. By 1906, the non-instrument churches, under the leadership of David Lipscomb, assumed a separate identity in the religious census of the nation.

It was not until 1918 that our people began to draw lines over the Sunday School question. N. L. Clark was the father of the non-class movement in Texas. Even though he debated the subject with men like G. H. P. Showalter and R. L. Whiteside, he never made it a test of fellowship. He even served with brother Showalter as co-editor of the *Firm Foundation* back in those days. But others began to draw lines and create parties, so that the division was well crystallized by the time I began to preach in 1935.

It was not until 1930 that plurality of cups became a test of fellowship. Some congregations used one cup and others a plurality of cups, each recognizing the other's autonomy. This division was still in the making when I began to preach, and I helped to make it in the state of California in the early 1940's. The Rodeo congregation would never have come into being in the Bay area if the Crocket congregation had not made a test of fellowship out of the cup question. I can name several cities in this state where brethren would have remained in congregations using one cup if they had continued to receive folk regardless of their position on the container. When the line was drawn, they moved out and started congregations using cups. Our folk will out of love defer to the conscience of others, with no strings attached, provided there is some semblance of love reciprocated. Alva Johnson, for example, died in my fellowship.

We must all come to see the restoration as a movement in process, not as something already completed or realized. Campbell saw this when he said, "It may yet deserve the construction of a larger vessel in a more propitious season." In seeing it as a process in which things are yet to be restored, I must recognize that I may not have all the truth on some things and that I may be in error on some things even now. This does not mean that I am lost, holding some erroneous views, though this conclusion would follow from the way I once reasoned. Must we draw new lines of fellowship each time we learn fresh truths. This has been the case in our odyssey of division. In my early days I sat at the Lord's Table with Homer L. King, Homer A. Gay, and James Stewart and drank both fermented and unfermented grape juice. But we decided it was wrong to drink the unfermented juice. We

did not merely quit using it in deference to our conscience. No, we had to draw the line of fellowship against all who used the fermented juice.

This possibility of my finding still other truths made me afraid to study, lest I discover something that would force yet another division. Another round of disfellowshipping, another division, another issue to debate about!

I saw something was seriously wrong when I couldn't even fellowship my old self of a few years ago. I saw something was wrong when I could not extend the right hand of fellowship to a single pioneer of the restoration movement. I could not fellowship one of them --- Alexander Campbell, Thomas Campbell, Barton Stone, Raccoon John Smith, John T. Johnson, Walter Scott, Jacob Creath, Robert Richardson, Philip Pendleton, Robert Milligan, J. W. McGarvey, Benjamin Franklin, Tolbert Fanning, Isaac Errett, J. B. Briney, H. Christopher, Clark Braden, David Lipscomb, Daniel Sommer. These and other illustrious names that adorn the pages of our history, I could not extend fellowship to a one of them. And not even to those men at whose feet I sat as a boy --- J. N. Cowan, R. F. Duckworth, J. W. Kelly, Charles Watkins, Alva Johnson, D. J. Whitten, G. H. P. Showalter, J. D. Tant. I could not recognize them as my brothers, for I and my little group constituted the kingdom of God upon the earth and embraced the redeemed of earth, although we held in our number less than one percent of the restoration movement and less than one-tenth of one percent of immersed believers in America.

As we look back in our history we can see that our odyssey of division has been unnecessary, for our people managed to differ on all these issues without splintering into sects. Why cannot we *now* permit each brother or each congregation to decide for himself or itself what is proper in the light of conscience and not draw lines against each other over the differences? We have differed over matters of cooperation almost from the beginning, but it never caused any breach in our ranks. It was not until after World War II that this issue was pressed to the dividing of brethren. I was present in the early 1950's in Cedar Rapids when G. K. Wallace and Burton Barber debated instrumental music. Along with the debate we had forums, and it was in a forum that James W. Nichols, then only in his 20's, avowed that he was going to have a national radio program. At that time he and James Willeford had a program supported by several congregations. It wasn't long until the Highland congregation in Abilene was on its way to a cooperative arrangement the like of which our people have never known. Opposition soon arose, bitter and strong. The division over this issue has since become solidified. But it did not have to come. It does not have to continue.

I have seen factions emerge, grow to maturity, and then splinter again-all in 10 to 20 years. Even now most all our factions are on the verge of splitting two, three, or even four different ways. Our present 25 or so splits could easily proliferate into 75 or a 100 warring factions and fragments.

Brethren, let me lay it on the line. If the Church of Christ is not capable of self-examination, there is no hope for it. If it cannot achieve the unity of the Spirit amidst all this diversity, there is no place for it. If it cannot preach good news instead of legalistic bad news, there is no need for it. If it cannot replace justification by law with motivation by love, there is no redemption in it. If it cannot reconcile rather than alienate, there is no health in it. We must bring to an end the fallacy of "preservation by separation" that now dictates our ways. The Bible in Gal. 5 puts the party spirit in the same category with adultery, idolatry and drunkenness. Bitterness and animosity are common in most issues of some of our journals.

I am tired of sleuces of slime and slices of slander. I am sick of the libels of labels and the castigations of categorizations. I am weary of the vitriol of verbalizations and the poison of propaganda and politics, as well as the venom of vendettas and the vice of vain venality and vandalism. May God deliver us from the farce, folly and fallacy of factionalizing. Too long have we been a fragmenting and fracturing fraternity, spawned by the egotism of editors and editorocracy.

It is at the foot of the cross that we become one. The unifying power of Jesus will integrate us and cause us to accept each other as we are. The world will never accept the testimony of a divine Sonship from a divided church. "May they be one, that the world may believe," Jesus prayed.

We are learning some things that should turn us in a different direction. Many of us no longer recognize any one faction among us as the one church, and we are realizing that no one sect among us will be able to assimilate all the others. We are becoming better educated and we are doing more thinking. We no longer highly value those things that we once debated and divided over. There is a sense of urgency about the world situation and the need for a united church.

We stand at the threshold of a brighter day for our people. The walls we have erected are beginning to crumble. Our youth are ignoring our divisions as artificial and meaningless. There is a surge toward oneness as never before, and it cannot be stopped. The Spirit is moving us toward Christ and each other. We stand at the threshold of a new restoration movement, one spurred by those outside our ranks even more than by those who are within. The question that remains is whether we will heal our wounds and prove our discipleship to the world in the way Jesus taught us: "By this shall all men know that you are my disciples."

We have lived to see the ebb tide of factionalism. The churning waters of hate are receding. Look up and take heart, for the best is yet to be.

Forgive, O Lord, our severing ways,

The separate altars that we raise,

The varying tongues that speak Thy praise!
Suffice it now. In time to be
Shall one great temple rise to Thee,
Thy church our broad humanity.
White flowers of love its walls shall climb,
Sweet bells of peace shall ring its chime,
Its days shall all be holy time.
Thy hymn, long sought, shall then be heard,
The music of the world's accord,
Confessing Christ, the inward word!
That song shall swell from shore to shore,
One faith, one love, one hope restore
The seamless garb that Jesus wore!

—John Greenleaf Whittier
— Given at Restoration Workshop, Los Gatos, Ca., March 27, 1971.

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A VISIT WITH PAT AND SHIRLEY BOONE

On March 27 it was my pleasure to share in the Restoration Workshop, a one-day unity meeting that brought together leaders from four different wings of Christian Churches --- Churches of Christ, in Los Gatos, California. Stan Harbour, who ministers to the Blossom Hill Church of Christ, directed the workshop. Since Pat Boone and his family were to be in the area presenting a concert of religious music, Stan invited Pat to be present. While his commitments kept him from accepting the invitation, he kindly arranged with Stan for me to meet with him the evening of the concert.

The concert was given at the First Baptist Church in San Jose, whose building sets magnificently on a hill overlooking the city, looking more like the Taj Mahal than a church building. Seating some 2500 people, *it* is equipped for dramatic productions as well as preaching, including a revolving stage. It *is* the most impressive church edifice I've ever seen. Our brethren who like to invest millions in brick and steel, but have little aesthetic imagination, could learn from those Baptists. In approaching the place we were surprised to see such a crowd. Cars were everywhere and folk were lined up a country mile waiting

to see the next performance. The Boones packed them in, upwards of 5,000 for the two rounds.

Pat had sent word that I was to visit with him backstage between performances, but because of his public I had trouble getting to him. He is popular in his own state as well as throughout the nation, for they had him surrounded with requests for everything from autographs to more spiritual testimony. But once I found Shirley and the girls and made my identity known, I was ushered into the dressing room where I finally had an exciting visit with the entire family.

The four girls had joined their parents in giving this concert, one punctuated not only with Pat leading the family in spiritual songs, but with a personal testimony as to the family's dedication to Jesus. "It is one thing to know *about* Jesus, but something else to know *him,"* he told the audiences. And Shirley explained that she believed this was a new direction that the Lord was leading them in their professional career-religious concerts that point to the solidarity and togetherness of the family. This was their first, but others are scheduled. On stage Pat makes it clear that the family is performing together in devotion to God and not simply to entertain.

I especially enjoyed the girls, all four of them, for they bubble over with youthful enthusiasm and spiritual awareness. Laury is the youngest at about 13. She told me of how she met with other kids at her school each morning and prayed for their teachers. Cherry, at 16, is the oldest and as lovely as a lily, talked at length about her school and family life, explaining that the only musical training she has had has been in the home. I was eager to know how she felt about the Church of Christ now that her parents had been withdrawn from at Inglewood, and whether they would leave us and go elsewhere. "I believe I am in Christ and therefore in his body," she said softly, "so I don't need to join anything."

The other two girls, Lindy and Debby, were busy watching out for their costumes, so I did not get to visit with them much. But I could see that they were no less lovely and interesting than the others. This family is a tribute to the church and a glorious testimony to the love of God.

Pat finally escaped from his admirers and took refuge in the dressing room where we could meet each other for the first time. In this TV and movie world of ours we feel that we sort of know famous people even when we haven't met them, and I felt this way about Pat, especially since we had corresponded. And yet nothing is a substitute for personal sharing, and this is what our visit was, a sharing of our experiences in the Lord. Only when our visit was over did I realize that most of our conversation was about Jesus and the Bible. That was one thing that impressed me about Pat, his knowledge of the Word and his ability to communicate it. I got the notion somewhere along the line that Pat could use some help in defending himself against all the onslaught of criticism, but I saw that he was fully capable of taking care of himself.

I was also impressed by the gentleman that Pat Boone is. He has a way of looking somewhat younger than his years, and there is a buoyancy of spirit about him that confirms his devotion to things that matter most. Even though he has a rightful claim to fame, he has the gift of setting his visitor at ease and making him feel that *he* is the celebrity. He is gracious, generous and gentle, as well as genteel On this occasion he not only wore his famous white shoes, but was dressed in a white suit as well, with a dashing tie. They would jail me if I appeared in such an outfit, but it was most appropriate for Pat Boone, accentuating as it did not only his good looks but his good heart as well. And he was dressed for work!

Shirley is a study in contrast from her husband, not that she is any less glamorous or attractive as a person, but I detected that she needs the strength of others more than Pat does. Shirley certainly has resources of power that have sustained her through all these trials, a strength centered in the indwelling Spirit, and yet she has a way of causing her friends to feel that she needs them, which endears her all the more to them. It is a virtue that a woman has best. Pat bears his self-reliance with humility, Shirley her dependence on others with dignity.

I might add that they both have charisma (what else!) .

I was eager to learn if the Boones were planning to leave the Church of Christ now that they had been kicked out. I was there to tell them that I knew of many who loved them and were praying for them and who hoped they would stay with us. And I wanted to welcome them to the club, to that swelling number of heroic souls among us who have chosen to be free rather than dead. Earlier I had mailed to the Boones a fistful of responses, mostly favorable, to the editorials and articles by them and about them that appeared in this journal. This they deeply appreciated, and they are using these to show their critics that there is more than one side to the attacks being published against them among Churches of Christ. I pointed out to them that all those responses not only came from their own Church of Christ folk, but they were written by people who were expressing their views, not to them, but to me, and that they were therefore less prejudicial. I also pointed out that while there were the bitter critics there were also the loving admirers, who, while they may not agree with all the conclusions that Pat and Shirley reached, they are encouraged by their determination to be free people in Jesus.

As to whether they planned to leave, Pat was unequivocal in his assertion that he had no plans other than to be where he has always been, in the Church of Christ. I was impressed by his and Shirley’s love for our people and the fact that they have no bitterness as to what happened at Inglewood and in the brotherhood press. They understand, and they are both sweet and reasonable about the whole thing. They are presently visiting at various congregations in the area, especially in San Fernando.

On my way out I was buttonholed by Pat's manager, who, upon hearing that I was a Church of Christ minister," demanded that I explain how the Church of Christ could treat Pat and Shirley the way they have, "after all he's done for them." Well, no one can deny that Pat has been used a great deal through the years in youth rallies, fund-raising programs, etc. Nor can it be denied that no one dreamed of kicking him out back in those days. It was only when he began taking Jesus seriously and "walking by the Spirit" that he was disfranchised. But I found it difficult to explain this strange mentality to an outsider like Pat's manager.

I explained first of all that many, many people in the Church of Christ do not agree with what Inglewood did, for they love and respect the Boones a great deal and believe they have the right to be different, whether they agree with them or not. And as for good folk like the Boones, people who really love God, being kicked out of the church, I pointed out to the gentleman that the only perfect man that ever lived, one that loved God absolutely, was killed by his own people. It was the church leaders who destroyed Jesus, probably because they feared him. He was different and had to be disposed of. So we need not be surprised when leaders of the modern church seek to destroy those who love Jesus, especially those who for some reason are a threat to their system. As Niebuhr puts it, "Whenever love and truth are incarnated, they are crucified."

Maybe I got through to him, for he replied "I hadn't thought of it that way."

The thing about all this that impressed me most was that when the word got around among the congregations I was visiting that I had talked with Pat and Shirley Boone, everybody wanted a report as to how the Boones were doing and what they were thinking. It made *me* feel like a celebrity!

Pat and Shirley are writing an exciting chapter in the history of our people, and they are helping us to grow by forcing us to face up to issues that are not easy. It is not a question of how right or wrong they may be in their new affirmations, but a matter of whether we are going to allow a person to be his own free man in Jesus. "It is before his own master that he stands or falls," is the way Paul chose to resolve such matters. We are slow in maturing to the place where we no longer assume that it is before *us* that he is to be judged. Fortunately, Pat and Shirley can be "Jesus people" (a term they like) even if somehow we *see* to it that they are no longer "Church of Christ people."

Oh, yes, I must add that I had to have my fun out of this episode. When Shirley gave me a fond, sisterly embrace upon my departure, I took full advantage of it when I called Ouida back home that weekend. 'I've been in California but one night," I told her, "and already I've been hugged by a movie actress." — *the Editor*

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REPORT ON MINI-MEETINGS

The Lord is providing me with time that I did not know I had, for I am somehow managing to spend every other weekend in these mini-meetings across the country. Nor did I suppose that there would be very much interest in this sort of thing, but already I have more invitations than I can take care of this year. Loving the brethren as I do, it is a refreshing experience to fly out of Dallas on Friday, after a busy week at the college, and join loved ones in an effort to do something constructive. The results thus far have been far more than I could have expected. My cup runs over with blessings of service. I am reminded of the apostle's assurance in Eph. 3:20 that God is "able to do immeasurably more than all we can ask or conceive." He has ways of surprising us, doesn't he? Even while we busy ourselves putting together our little games, he is conjuring up something much better. It is that way, that is, if we are intent on walking by the Spirit rather than our own way.

Due to two trips to Abilene early in the year, during which I was present for both the Preacher's Workshop and the lectureship, the first mini-meeting was not until late in February, which took me to Nacogdoches, Texas, down East in lumber country where the pines grow Texas-size. It is the home of Stephen F. Austin State University, and part of my time was spent with college students who gather at one of the Bible chairs there. I found them vivacious in spirit as well as alive in the Spirit, and they were eager to exchange ideas. I was in meetings with professors, elders, and young couples as well, and on Lord's Day I addressed one of the mainline Churches of Christ on *Jesus Is My Shepherd*,

In March I was in San Antonio, Texas and the Bay Area of California. In the Alamo city I was the guest of a youth director and his sweet little wife, who invited me down out of curiosity as much as anything else. This journal had somehow fallen into his hand, and when I offered to make visits of an unpretentious nature, he thought this would give him a good chance to see what I look like. He made plans for me to visit with the youth of the mainline Church of Christ he serves, but, when the word got around that it was Leroy Garrett that was coming, there was enough flak that he decided to change his plans. He did right, for I am determined that these meetings be for peace. We are not up to anything and we've had enough adrenalin in the brotherhood to last the rest of this century.

It would have been worth the trip to San Antonio just to have visited with this tremendous young couple, who were at that time "expecting" in a way that I know how to relate to. An adoptive agency was on the verge of depositing a little bundle of heaven at their doorstep. Being an interracial agency they had no idea what color their baby would be, but they were expecting it to be black. There I was with this lovely young couple, both born and bred Texans and Church of Christ to the core, expecting a Negro to join their family. The baby has since arrived, and while he happens not to be black, he is apparently

too much of a mixture to be called anglo. They don't seem to know! One thing they do know, for their latest letter says, "We love him so!"

But we were busy in San Antonio, visiting with small groups of disciples who were eager to share life in the Spirit. I was especially impressed with a group of older people, elders and leaders in various Churches of Christ in the area, most of whom are weary of the party spirit of our people. We spent considerable time talking about the unity of the Spirit and the freedom that is in Christ. I was impressed that during the prayers, in which both brothers and sisters talked to the Father, preachers and elders of the various congregations were prayed for that they might be more spiritual in their leadership. That illustrates what is happening these days: brethren in prayer groups praying for their leaders to get with it. And the leadership *had* better get with it or they're going to be left behind.

On Lord's Day I attended the assembly with my hosts, a rather large congregation, and heard an interesting lesson from a very fine minister in the Lord, who, by the way, has adopted two Negro children into his family. That afternoon I went. to see Pat Boone's *The Cross and the Switchblade* with several youths of the congregation. A Roman Catholic nun sat in front of us. The young lady sitting beside me was eager to know what the nun thought about it all. I suggested she wait until after the showing and then ask her. She did speak to the sister and asked her what she thought of the film. The nun was herself young, bright and gracious. .'It shows that the power of the man was his faith in what Jesus could do for those hoodlums," was the essence of her reply. I was thinking what a problem I would have in explaining to such a person why my church would excommunicate the star of the film. It is just as well that I didn't try, though I was compelled to do so to Pat's own manager when I got out to California, which I tell about in another article in this issue.

The weekend in California was filled with meetings that could hardly be called *mini*. While there were some small group sessions, the Restoration Workshop, conducted all day Saturday by the Blossom Hill Church of Christ, was well-attended by folk from a wide area. A good spirit prevailed throughout, and many brethren had their first experience with a unity meeting. Leaders from four different groups of the Restoration Movement shared in the program, but the greatest value was the opportunity for togetherness that involved all those present.

On Lord's Day it was my pleasure to address three different Churches of Christ in the area, all mainline and all substantial and influential congregations. In each case I was introduced by the minister of the congregation and in each case encouraging words were spoken in reference to our unity efforts. As I flew back to Texas that night I could thank God for moving us far ahead of the timetable as I had it figured. In another decade or so I could envisage the likes of Leroy Garrett being introduced to our congregations and being encouraged to speak on unity. But I was hardly ready for the Lord to move us so quickly,

even if it was California where the redwoods grow tall and where men's spirits tower heavenward.

I felt somewhat like one enterprising brother who thought maybe he could slip me into the class he teaches on Sunday morning and be questioned by some of his eager students, that perhaps there would not be any objection if too much were not made of it. I told him I thought I could do that, but that I would first be addressing his congregation at the main service. "You're kidding," he said in disbelief. My reaction was also one of disbelief as I moved from one congregation to the next, three in one day, to address disciples that I supposed would be denied a chance to hear my plea.

But this is not my victory, but that of the brethren who showed themselves willing to hear a controversial person. It proves them to be more mature and freer than most. They have grown tall enough to know that they can give a courteous ear to any well-meaning brother without accepting all he may say.

So, in this one report I am not only chronicling a series of meetings intended to be *mini*, but also appearances before four of our mainline Churches of Christ at major services. That shows how the Holy Spirit is working with us all, bringing about changes that are surprising. To those who were uneasy over my appearance before their congregation can testify that there were no earthshaking consequences. The roof did not fall in. Pandemonium did not break loose. My lessons were reasonably constrictive and the congregations are probably no worse off because of it. Indeed, they are better off in one sense at least, and that is that they have proved themselves open enough to hear a man who is reputedly different. That makes them stand taller rather than the one they hear.

(In these reports I am deliberately omitting names of persons and congregations that I would prefer to mention because of my love and appreciation for them. But these meetings began as private affairs and I want to cooperate with that intention). --- *the Editor*

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READERS' EXCHANGE

I was in Washington D.C. working with a committee on a revision of the Armed Forces Hymnal, of which I was the musical editor in 1959. It is unbelievable what has happened to the Catholics. They no longer want a Catholic Section, but want a section of Christian Hymns as distinguished from the Jewish music and liturgy, which uses mostly the Hebrew language. Latin is out completely for the time being. This would have been unthinkable a few years ago. — *from a professor of music, Princeton Seminary.*

I am searching as never before. I have been taught from childhood to condemn and otherwise act like a savage toward my brethren. Through enlightening articles from Ketcherside and your own "Restoration Review," I am awakening to what Christianity is all about. To put it shortly, I am learning to love instead of hate. — *Minister of the Gospel, Florida*

I was happy to see ACC have the Workshop and good usually follows. I believe we are making progress with all of our problems. — *James L. Lovell, California*

I find yours, Carl Ketcherside's, and sometimes *Mission* invaluable in preparing Sunday School lessons. We are using a book written by one of our preachers. It is so bad, containing the usual Church of Christ viewpoint, that r thought of sending it to you for review. But I decided the less exposure for this book, the better, for publishers usually take any review as a good review from the viewpoint of sales. I heard great things about the Preachers Workshop at ACC. — *Texas*

You would be surprised at how many open-minded brethren there are here. I have been encouraged in the last few months. When I first began to read *Restoration Review* and *Mission Messenger* and other such papers, I got discouraged. But now there are many brothers with whom I have talked who are beginning to see (as I am) what the Gospel really is! — *ministerial student at a Christian College*

We came here six months ago and this is the most loving and unified group of people I have ever seen anywhere. They are truly making prayer for oneness come true. — *Indiana*

Please tell Pat Boone that his book deeply touched me. Also my son-in-law who is a navigator of an F-4 read it and was greatly impressed. He's a good Christian man, but we sat up talking one night after he read the book, and he said he's going to be a better witness to others, that he hasn't stressed his faith with those in his group. He has more or less kept it to himself. So Pat's book has helped to make a good man even better. — *Illinois*

We've been enjoying your publication for several years now, but have never taken time to write and tell you how very much we do enjoy it. Sometimes when I start getting that feeling that there is no hope at all for the Church of Christ, your paper reminds me that we are not the only ones who have questioned, and maybe *someday. — from ones who did finally leave us, but who keep in touch*

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